

October 9, 2009

Dear Chancellor Perlman:

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has reviewed the Life Science Proposals from the State of the University address, September 10, 2009. Overall we appreciate the efforts put into this document and support many of its recommendations. However, Susan Poser reported at the October 6, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting that some of those recommendations are already in the process of being implemented. Therefore, we feel we need to express a few concerns, most of which are about shared governance during the implementation of these initiatives.

Associate to the Chancellor Poser and the document clearly stated that the Executive Committee of the Faculty of the Life Sciences (FLS) would have no governing authority and, therefore, would be appointed by you. Nevertheless, the document indicates that "the Executive Committee would be responsible for organizing the activities of the FLS and shall be the direct conduit through which proposals from the General Assembly will be communicated to the administration." The Faculty Senate Executive Committee feels strongly that this is sufficient governance to warrant election of this committee by the General Assembly of the FLS. We consider it reasonable that you might wish to appoint an initial temporary committee, but it should be made very clear that within one year of initiation of the FLS, the entire committee would need to be elected. Moreover, there should be procedures set in place to ensure that the full spectrum of life sciences faculty is represented on the Executive Committee.

While we fully agree that the FLS should be self selected, some of the other recommendations in this document are not consistent with the concept of self selection. For example, the development of a core curriculum for the life sciences can really only happen once the life sciences have been defined. It is critical that faculty involved with all majors that would be affected by this core curriculum be involved in defining that curriculum. Thus it seems the first task is to define what majors would be included within the life sciences. We fully support all efforts to enhance cooperation between the SVCAA and VCIANR. However, we also believe that faculty should be involved in identifying which of their peers will be involved in developing a core curriculum.

We also have questions and concerns about the core facilities recommendation. We assume the goal behind the core facilities recommendation is to minimize duplication of major equipment purchases across campus, and to improve interaction among faculty using similar equipment. If the goal is also to make such facilities financially self-supporting over the long-term, we express concern about how cost of use will be determined, and that the costs may become prohibitive for faculty with limited resources and those who use the equipment only occasionally. We also have concerns about plans to appoint faculty to serve on the Life Science Advisory Committee on Instrumentation. While this committee may have relevance to a smaller group of faculty than the Executive Committee of the FLS, it is still most appropriate to allow all faculty affected to have a say in who serves on such a committee.

For the most part, we were very supportive of the integrated hiring plan recommendation. There were, however, concerns about some of the language used. We agree that final decisions about hiring new faculty fall in the hands of the administration. However, in our experience, most

position descriptions are written by faculty, and new hires are made based on the recommendations of faculty. We feel strongly that faculty already have a greater role in new faculty hires than merely being "...extraordinarily useful in focusing attention on issues...". We also strongly support the role this recommendation would play in increasing cooperation among colleges and units to minimize overlap in faculty responsibilities as well as enhancing cooperation among groups of faculty.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns and suggestions, we hope that you will take them into account as the Life Science proposals are implemented.

Sincerely,

Faculty Senate Executive Committee